REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection of the claims as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,579,018 to Li.

One of the features of independent claim 25 is that ***each single wavelength channel is switchable by only a single switching matrix***. In other words, there is only ***one*** switching matrix per wavelength.

By contrast, Li discloses the use of ***two*** switching matrices per wavelength.

The Examiner directed the applicant's attention to Fig. 23 of Li. This figure confirms that Li discloses using ***two*** switching matrices per wavelength. Note that there are ***two*** switching matrices 70, 70 for the first wavelength λ_j and there are ***two*** more switching matrices 80, 80 for the second wavelength λ_k.

As previously argued, and as described and illustrated in applicant's application, the prior art, as illustrated in Fig. 2, discloses the use of ***two*** switching matrices AS1 and SS1 for each wavelength $\lambda 1$. The use of the extra redundant protection matrix SS1 represents an unacceptable extra equipment cost and increased circuit complexity.

By contrast, main claim 25 recites, as illustrated in Fig. 3, that switching matrix S1 only switches wavelength channel $\lambda 1$. Each single wavelength channel is switchable by only a single switching matrix. Thus, wavelength channel $\lambda 1$ is only switched by switching matrix S1.

This recitation is in contrast with the prior art of Fig. 2 and of the newly cited Li, wherein each wavelength channel is switched by ***two*** switching matrices. Applicant provides no extra switching matrix for each wavelength. Instead, applicant's switching matrix S1 can transmit

the information to the target node. If switching matrix S1 fails, then applicant's switching matrix S2 (which carries the same information) can complete the transmission.

There does not appear to be any motivation or suggestion in Li to utilize only a single wavelength selective switching matrix for each wavelength channel, and to minimize the number of switching matrices used. Indeed, Li's inclusion of "additional" switching matrices teaches against the approach of the present invention. It is, therefore, submitted that claim 25 is also not obvious in view of Li. It follows that dependent claims 26-30 are also novel and non-obvious in view of Li.

It is believed that this application is in order for allowance.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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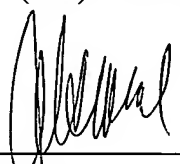

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